

Observations on the Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus* (L.) (Lep.; Lycaenidae) in an Essex garden

Over the past six years I have been monitoring adults of Holly Blue butterflies attracted to ivy *Hedera helix* in my garden to see if a crash of numbers occurs on a regular basis. The ivy covers a brick wall and extends for 30 metres aligned west to east. The results of this survey are shown in Table 1, below.

Season	flight period observed	number of adults seen
Spring	8. iv. to 13. v. 1996	32
Summer	19. vii. to 10. viii. 1996	49
Spring	1. iv. to 25. v. 1997	20
Summer	26. vii. to 14. ix. 1997	11
Spring	22. iv. to 20. v. 1998	28
Summer	18. vii. to 25. ix. 1998	51
Spring	11. iv. to 29. v. 1999	19
Summer	15. vii. to 4. ix. 1999	8
Spring	16. v. 2000	1
Summer	20. vii. to 1. ix. 2000	44
Spring	3. v. to 28. v. 2001	18
Summer	18. vii. to 24. viii. 2001	81

Table 1: observations on flight period and numbers of Holly Blue butterflies in an Essex garden.

The histogram in Figure 1 shows more clearly the pattern so far noticed, though the results must be regarded as provisional, particularly since observations were made over a relatively short span of years. Nevertheless, the second generation seems to

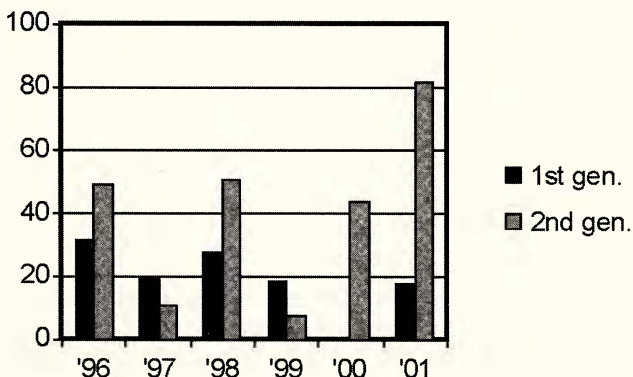


Figure 1. Annual fluctuations in numbers of first and second generation adult Holly Blue butterflies in an Essex garden

fluctuate in alternative years from a high to a low count, whereas the spring generation is more stable with an average of twenty-three adults annually with the exception of the year 2000, when only one adult was seen. This followed a poor summer generation in 1999, evidence perhaps of a population crash due to parasites or poor weather. Interestingly, following this set back, the summer generation of 2000 was immediately back to normal levels.

Six years is clearly not long enough to see if a population crash follows a regular trend and it will be interesting to see if the alternating high-low fluctuation of the second generation is continued (the high numbers in 2001 would appear to be out of step).— BRIAN GOODEY, 298 Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 4ET (E-mail: brian.goodey@dial.pipex.com).

SUBSCRIBER NOTICE

Microlepidoptera of Middlesex – final appeal for records

A provisional list of the microlepidoptera of Middlesex vice county – essentially London – will be published, hopefully, in December this year, 2002, in the journal *The London Naturalist*. The list currently stands at 779 species, plus four that are probably correct, but which are not confirmed. This is surprisingly low, at least as an “all time” total, compared with adjacent Hertfordshire, for example, which boasts 883 species. As a matter of passing interest, Middlesex boasts 572 all time macro-moth species, compared with Hertfordshire’s 605, and so perhaps the county is less rich in moth species? The last time a list was produced of micro moths in Middlesex was in the year 1898; both the county and its fauna have changed considerably.

Whilst the species may be moderately well reported, their distribution across the county, which includes the ancient woodland at Ruislip Woods National Nature Reserve at one extreme and Soho at the other, is anything but. Surely, there are far more records out there in reader-land than there are on my database? This is your last chance to have them included in the provisional vice county listing. Sent them by post or by e-mail to my address below before the summer moth season starts this year or they will not be included.— COLIN W. PLANT, 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 3QP (E-mail: colinwplant@ntlworld.com).

BOOK REVIEWS

The moths of Devon by Roy McCormick. Privately published, 2001. 328 pp., hardbound, 218 x 152 mm. ISBN 09540256 1 X. Available from 47 Oaklands Park, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0BP. A two-page *Errata* slip accompanies the book.

Subtitled *An account of the Pyralid, Plume and Macromoths of Devon*, this is an important and long-overdue addition to the list of county moth faunas covering the British Isles. The *Introduction*, which opens the work, tells us how the author arrived in Devon to discover that moth recording was at a “very low ebb”; his efforts to get things moving have resulted in the present work. A brief introduction to the *Geology and landscape* of Devon and a brief discussion on *Climate and weather* follow, before an interesting, if somewhat truncated section